

# A Systematic Review of Family Meal Frequency and Risk Taking Behaviors in Adolescence

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The purpose of this systematic review is to examine the association between adolescent health behaviors (alcohol use, cigarette smoking and marijuana use) and family meal routines. Following the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses by Mosher and colleagues, the search was conducted using select databases (CINAHL, Medline, PSYCHINFO, and Social Science Index). Keywords were *family meals and adolescence*. The search parameters were set to include adolescent's ages 9-18, English language and journal articles only. The preliminary search generated 169 articles and one article was added from the reference lists. A total of 11 articles met the criteria for the review after 159 articles were excluded due to duplication and initial review. Three of seven studies that examined the relationship between tobacco use and family meals found an inverse relationship between the two for both male and females. Seven articles examined family meal frequency and marijuana use. Four of those articles found an association between an increased frequency of meals and a decreased use of marijuana in females but not males. Three of seven articles found an inverse relationship between alcohol use and family meal routines. Family meals appear to be a protective factor for adolescent risky health behaviors, however, more research is needed to examine the quality and quantity of family meals. The "dosage" would be important in developing guidelines for education and intervening with families.

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